THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • THURSDAY • JULY 23, 2020 • ₹7.00 • PAGES 18 • LATE CITY EDITION

Visitors talk on an intercom at the entrance of the Chinese Consulate General in Houston on Wednesday, which has been asked to shut | AP

READ SHARE FOLLOW
newindianexpress.com
facebook.com/thenewindianexpress twitter.com/newindianexpress
instagram.com/newindianexpress

CHINA RED-FACED AS U.S. ASKS IT TO CLOSE HOUSTON CONSULATE

The US government on Wednesday ordered China to "cease all operations and events" at its consulate in Houston, Texas

STATE DEPT HINTS AT CYBER ESPIONAGE

The US decision follows the Justice Dept's claim that Chinese government backed hackers targeted firms developing Covid-19 vaccines. The US State Dept said the move is aimed at protecting American intellectual property and private information. After the US announcement, Chinese officials were seen burning bundles of documents inside the consulate compound

BEIJING THREATENS TO RETALIATE

- Reacting strongly to the US move, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin termed it as an "unprecedented escalation" and warned retaliatory measures
- Wang also claimed the Chinese embassy and consulates in the US had received both explosives and death threats recently | P11

5

NO. OF CONSULATES-GENERAL CHINA HAS IN THE U.S., BESIDES ITS EMBASSY

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TRICHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILUPURAM • KOLLAM • WARANGAL • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Invest, says PM. Let's go beyond trade: EAM to US

Important to cultivate strong bilateral ties amid threats from China, agrees Pompeo

PUSHKAR BANAKAR @ New Delhi

THERE has never been a better time to invest in India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Wednesday, inviting foreign investments and adding that the Indo-US partnership should help the world bounce back from the coronavirus pandemic.

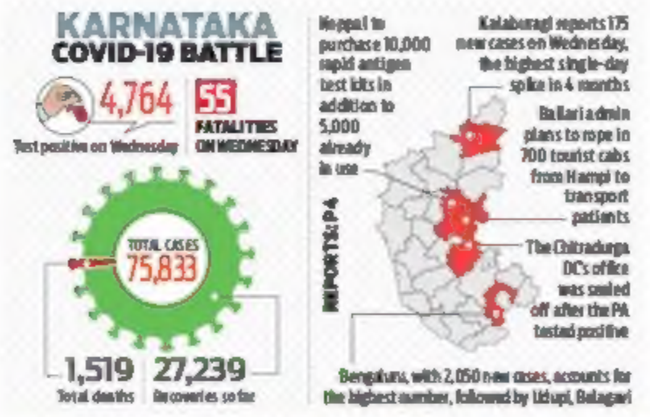
Delivering the keynote address at the US-India Business Council-hosted India Ideas Summit virtually, Modi said, "India is contributing towards a prosperous and resilient world through the clarion call of Aatmanirbhar Bharat. There is global optimism towards India as it offers a perfect combination of openness, opportunities and options." The Prime Minister said that global economic resilience can be achieved by stronger economic capacities.

Earlier in the day, speaking at the summit, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar pitched for India-US relations to go beyond trade. "The US really needs to learn to work in a multi-polar world. It needs to go beyond alliances that it has grown up with in the last two decades. We need to find more common ground. For Indo-US relations, we need to think beyond trade," he said. The minister's statement comes in the backdrop of China warning India against siding with the US, saying that it was wishful thinking by New Delhi if it hoped that Washington will stand by it.

Jaishankar's views were echoed by US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, who also virtually participated in the summit. "We believe this is a new age of relationship between the US and India. It is important for the two countries to cultivate strong ties amid threats posed by the Chinese Communist Party (CCP)," he said , adding that India was a key player in an open and free Indo-Pacific.

Modi said the poor and vulnerable must be at the core of the growth agenda. "Ease of living is as important as ease of business. The pandemic has reminded us of the importance of resilience of the global economy against external shocks, which can be achieved by stronger domestic economic capacities," he said.

Spelling out the sectors that can attract investment, the PM said: "The healthcare sector in India is growing faster than 22% every year and the progress of Indian companies in production of medical-technology, telemedicine and diagnostics has been immense."


KARNATAKA
COVID-19 BATTLE
4,764
Test positive on Wednesday
55
FATALITIES ON WEDNESDAY
TOTAL CASES
75,833
1,519
Total deaths
27,239
Recoveries so far
Nepal to purchase 10,000 rapid antigen test kits in addition to 5,000 already in use
Kalaburagi reports 175 new cases on Wednesday, the highest single-day spike in 4 months
Ballari admin plans to rope in 700 tourist cabs from Hampi to transport patients
The Chitradurga DC's office was sealed off after the PA tested positive
REPORTS: PA
Bengaluru, with 2,050 new cases, accounts for the highest number, followed by Udupi, Belagavi

A video grab of the ambulance that was torched by a group following the death of a Covid patient at the Civil Hospital in Belagavi on Wednesday night | EXPRESS

Ambulance torched by angry mob in Belagavi

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Belagavi

A group of people torched an ambulance and resorted to stone-throwing at Belagavi Civil Hospital around 10 pm on Wednesday, apparently agitated over the death of a Covid-19 patient in the hospital. The mob alleged negligence of the hospital staff in treating the patient who died late on Wednesday night.

According to the APMC Station Police Inspector, several people from Athani gathered at the hospital after the death of the patient and stoned the Civil Hospital and many other vehicles parked outside before setting the ambulance on fire. They also tried to attack the hospital staff.

A case has been registered at the APMC police station in connection with the violence.

With Covid surge, Karnataka sees cases doubling in 10 days

IFFATH FATHIMA AND RANJANI MADHAVAN @ Bengaluru

WITH the number of Covid-19 cases galloping every day, Karnataka has now joined Andhra Pradesh and Meghalaya at the top as regards the doubling rate of the disease. It is now taking only 10 days for the numbers double in the state, according to the state war room report as of July 21. Among other high prevalence states, the time taken is 21 days in Tamil Nadu, 23 days in Maharashtra and 29 days in Delhi.

Epidemiologist Dr Giridhar Babu, Professor and Head of Lifecourse Epidemiology at Public Health Foundation of India, pointed out that the doubling time will reduce further as Covid cases surge. "This is a reflection of our R-naught value, which represents the number of people each person can infect. Karnataka's R-naught value is 1.31 at the moment and the goal is to bring it down to less than 1, which means there is no transmission from one person to another. The doubling rate also indicates the population characteristics of how we are moving around and how we comply with social distancing and wearing of masks," said Dr Babu, who is also a member of the Covid-19 technical advisory committee to the State Government.

On June 20, Karnataka was at the 11th spot, compared to other states, wherein it took 16 days for the number of cases to double. On June 30, the state climbed to the 7th spot with the time reducing to 15 days. The situation declined further thereafter. On July 10, the state was at second spot with the doubling time at nine days.

Nodal officer for Covid testing in the state, Dr C N Manjunath, who is also the director of Jayadeva Institute of Cardiovascular Sciences and Research, said the doubling rate could be indicative of segmental community transmission. "One of the reasons is that there are pockets of segmental community transmission. In addition to this, the number of tests being done has gone up in the last 10-15 days from 15,000 a day to 35,000 a day. If we were observing higher rate of doubling with no increase in the number of tests, then it would be a problem. Here, however, we have ramped up testing," Dr Manjunath explained.

Medical Education Minister Dr K Sudhakar, who has not admitted to community transmission in Karnataka, said the state is conducting 17,296 tests per million population, which is one of the highest in the country. P5

Victim's kin assault doc at B'luru hospital

IFFATH FATHIMA @ Bengaluru

In yet another case of attack on Covid warriors, a 48-year-old physician at the government-run KC General Hospital here was manhandled by relatives of a Covid victim on Tuesday evening. The cause for the altercation was supposedly the hospital authorities telling them to wait for Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike's approval whereas they wanted take away the body immediately.

According to a senior doctor at the hospital, a 43-year-old woman was admitted with Severe Acute Respiratory Infection on June 19 and the rapid antigen test result was inconclusive. Another test was performed and she was found to be Covid-positive and was shifted to the Covid ward.

"On Tuesday morning, her condition started deteriorating and we asked the patient's relatives to take her to another hospital as she needed to be admitted in the ICU. Our ICU is not functioning as some staffers recently tested Covid-positive. But they refused to take her elsewhere and the patient died in the afternoon. Then, they wanted to immediately take the body, but we couldn't allow as protocol needs to be followed and BBMP officials have to check the packing of the body. But they got furious and started to argue and assaulted one of the senior physicians," said a senior doctor.

In a video shot by the physician, the relatives of the patient are seen arguing when one of them tries to grab the phone. "The incident happened at 4.30 pm on Tuesday and our doctor was manhandled and assaulted," said a doctor. P5

EXPRESS READ

SC rules out physical hearings at present

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Wednesday ruled out the possibility of conducting physical hearings at present in view of the ongoing Covid-19 situation. A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde said that a seven-judge committee of the apex court will consider after four weeks the aspect of re-starting physical hearing in the top court.

IAF sent strong signal to adversaries: Rajnath

New Delhi: Defence Minister Rajnath Singh on Wednesday complimented the IAF for its rapid deployment of assets at forward locations due to the border row with China in eastern Ladakh, saying its Balakot strike and the current combat readiness have sent a strong message to "adversaries". He said the nation's resolve to defend its sovereignty stands firm.

POLITICAL DECORUM

Newly elected Rajya Sabha member Jyotiraditya Scindia (L), who joined the BJP in March, greets his former Congress colleagues Ghulam Nabi Azad and Digvijaya Singh, before taking oath at Parliament House in New Delhi on Wednesday | PTI

Tribal leader among 5 named for Council seat

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE
@ Bengaluru

A tribal leader from Yellapur and an Economics professor from North Karnataka have been nominated to the Karnataka Legislative Council on Tuesday, along with former ministers A H Vishwanath, C P Yogeshwara and BJP Mahila Morcha state president Bharati Shetty.

A notification to this effect was issued from Raj Bhavan hours after Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa met Governor Vajibhai Vala to get his assent for the nomination of five candidates, including Shantarama Budna Siddi, the tribal leader who is also a member of the RSS since his college days, and Dr Talwar Sabanna, Professor of Economics at Rani Channamma University, Belagavi.

DETAILED REPORT: P3

AMID POLITICAL CRISIS, ED RAIDS GEHLOT'S BROTHER

RAJESH ASNANI @ Jaipur

EVEN as the political crisis in Rajasthan continues unabated, the Enforcement Directorate on Wednesday raided the premises of CM Ashok Gehlot's brother Agrasen in Jodhpur. This is the fifth major action by central agencies against people linked to the Chief Minister.

Wednesday's raids were in connection with a money-laundering case linked to an alleged fertiliser scam. Agrasen is accused of exporting subsidised fertilisers meant for farmers during 2007-2009, when the UPA was in power at the Centre.

Officials said Agrasen is facing a ₹7 crore penalty from the Customs department in the alleged scam.

Agrasen owns a Jodhpur-based company named Anupam Krishi and the raids on his premises were conducted as part of a nationwide search.

On Wednesday, the ED also interrogated Ratankant Sharma, the owner of Hotel Fairmont where MLAs supporting CM Ashok Gehlot are staying. According to sources, he has business links with the CM's son Vaibhav.

Sharma was raided and questioned last week, too, in connection with a case of money laundering from Mauritius.

Meanwhile, the legal battle between Sachin Pilot and Gehlot shifted to the Supreme Court with Rajasthan Speaker moving the SC against the HC order asking him to defer disqualification proceedings against Pilot and 18 other dissident MLAs.

Soon after the raid on CM's brother, Congress leader Randeep Singh Surjewala said the BJP has created a 'raid raj' and is misusing central agencies to topple the Gehlot government.

Meanwhile, Gehlot shot off a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi alleging some BJP leaders were trying to topple his government. P9

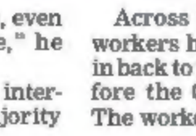
IN SEARCH OF LIVELIHOOD

Returning to earlier jobs, but it's just a trickle

BOSKY KHANNA, BIJAY CHAKI, RAJESH ABRAHAM, DHANESH KALLUNGAL, RITIKA ARUN VAISHALI & AIHIK SUR
@ Bengaluru / Bhubaneswar / Kochi / Vijayawada / Hyderabad

"WE are worried about money at the moment, not our health. The poor have no health to worry about," Ravi Chourasiya, 30, a contract carpenter in Bengaluru's Cox Town, says stoically. "Back home in Bihar, I have to feed my aged parents, two sisters, wife, two children and a younger brother. There was no source of income, so I had to come back to Bengaluru, even in this dangerous time," he says.

Chourasiya's story is interchangeable with the majority of lakhs of Indian migrant workers, who without warning found themselves jobless at the end of March and stranded far from their homes. During the lockdown, Chourasiya went to his home state, but the familiar dearth of suitable jobs there has now forced him to return to Bengaluru.



Across the South, migrant workers have begun trickling in back to the jobs they held before the Covid-19 lockdown. The workers say they have no choice but to return as government subsidies at their home states are not enough to sustain them any longer.

"I earned just ₹828 from the MGNREGA work I did for a week and received ₹2,000 as government incentive after two months. How can my family live on such a meagre sum," asks Narendra, a migrant from Cuttack district in Odisha.

There are few jobs to be had in migrants' native villages. Birendra Das from West Bengal says, "In my village, shops and restaurants restarted in June first week, but I could not find any job, not even as a cleaner. I tried for nearly a month, but in Vijayawada my boss was ready to hire me back. So though I wasn't willing to, I returned on June 27," says Das.

But travelling back to states where they had worked is not easy. Employers in Kerala say thousands in West Bengal, Assam, Uttar Pradesh and Bihar are unable to return either due to a lack of trains or stringent travel restrictions in their home states. "We are ready to meet the initial quarantine and food expenses of the returning workers. But, we are told their home states, especially West Bengal and Assam, are not ready to provide the sanction for travel," says Shibin Jose, director, KLR Facility Management, a Kochi-based manpower supplier.

CONTINUED ON: P5

First-of-its-kind suit on climate change in Oz

In what may be a first-of-its-kind action, an Australian student has sued the government for failing to disclose climate change risks to investors in sovereign bonds. Kathleen O'Donnell, a 23-year-old student who owns Australian government bonds, is the lead claimant in the class action filed in the Federal Court. The lawsuit alleges Australia's economy and reputation will be significantly impacted by the government's response to climate change. | P14